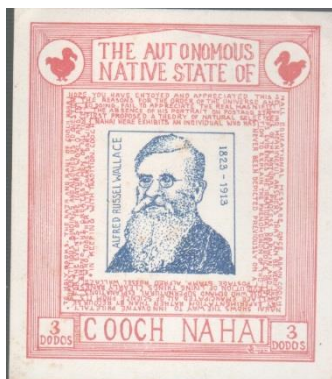


ALFRED RUSSEL WALLACE, EVOLUTIONIST, ON POSTAGE STAMPS

Indraneil Das, BU1857, and Pui Yong Min

Alfred Russel Wallace (1823–1913) has been described as an explorer, biologist, geographer, and anthropologist. A leading evolutionary thinker of his time, as well as pioneering biogeographer, Wallace is famously associated with Darwin for the theory of evolution through natural selection.



Alfred Russel Wallace
(cinderella stamp)

On 1 July 2009, miniature sheet of four stamps was issued, purportedly from the West African island nation of São Tomé and Príncipe.

The postal material of this tiny island state (including stamp design, production, and distribution) for a long time was under the control of a large philatelic company in Argentina. This company has similar agreements with other developing nations in Africa, the West Indies, and Oceania. One is unlikely to see valid postal use of such products.

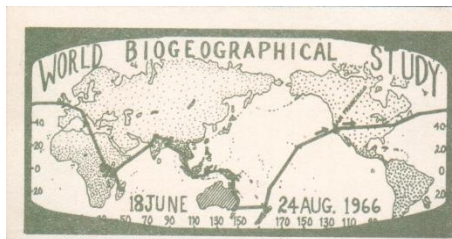
The sheet shows three images of Wallace: One in his late youth from the year 1847 as he would have appeared before his arrival in Sarawak (Sc#2139a), a middle-aged Wallace in 1869 (Sc#2139b), and in his later years from the portrait by Roger Remington in the Meeting Room of the Linnean Society of London (Sc#2139c).

Each of the three stamps show Wallace with a dinosaur in the background, a group of animals on which he did not publish.

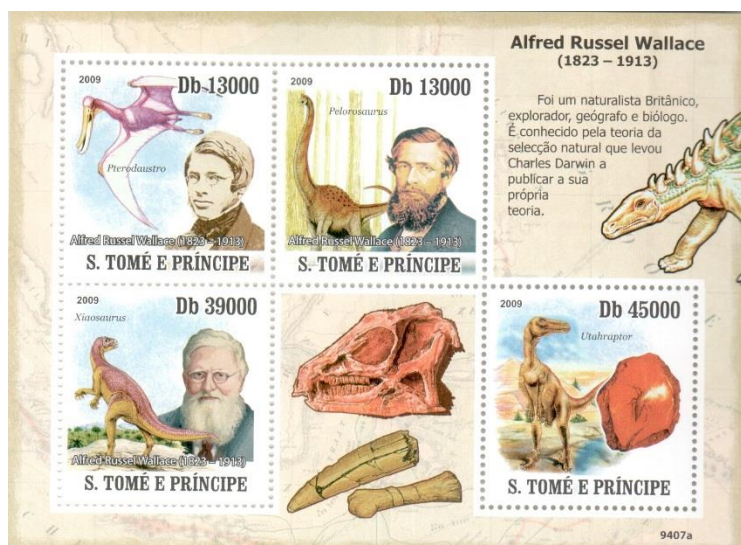
Matters were set right on 3 March 2010, by the Royal Mail, the postal authority of Great Britain, when it issued a set of ten stamps, commemorating the 350th anniversary of the Royal Society. Arguably the world's oldest scientific society, this issue chose carefully amongst the many luminaries that are counted among its members.

The set included Wallace for his contributions to the development of the theory of evolution through natural selection. Wallace's portrait here was the same 1869 image used in the miniature sheet. All ten values are for 1st class postage within the country.

The first stamp showing Wallace was privately issued around 1978 by the Rajah of the Autonomous Native State of Cooch Nahai, an imaginary country set in Redwood, California, and "ruled" by the eccentric Dr. Lawrence Wesley Swan (1922–1999), a professor of Zoology at California State University in San Francisco.



In philatelic lexicon, this as well as others in the series, including one without a face value showing a map of the earth and its biogeographical regions, are known as "cinderellas." The face value is in "dodos," the official currency of Cooch Nahai.



Alfred Russel Wallace (1823–1913)
St. Thomas & Prince, 2009, Sc#2139



Alfred Russel Wallace
GB, 2010, Sc#2752